



Typical fast-food parcels along McMillian Street

## ISSUES

The District over the last 20 years has deteriorated both physically and functionally. Its relationship to the community and University has become ill-defined and under utilized. Solutions to issues that have impacted the image, function, and viability of the District are critical to its long term development and prosperity.

The area that borders the southern edge of the University of Cincinnati was typically high quality, 3 story residences until the University expanded in the 1930's and the need for commercial development increased. The commercial spine that soon developed along Calhoun Street was denser and contained both retail and residential units until the 1960's, when fast food restaurants began to proliferate in the area. With the advent of the drive-thrus and reduction in the quality of the housing stock, the district has deteriorated into a quasi-retail strip with an inhospitable environment, where it neither serves the local residences nor the University adequately.

This deterioration was the result of many factors: the introduction of the one-way traffic system, proliferation of fast food operations which created large amounts of open parking fields, flight of specialty retail, need for low cost housing units that discouraged upkeep, and urban redevelopment that occurred in the 1960's which transformed the higher density building stock to individual one-story structures.

The change in the district character and function has created a strain in the relationship between the local community and the University. In recent years, the University has begun to address this special relationship to the surrounding neighborhoods through its own campus masterplan and has committed to help promote redevelopment that will serve both the community and the University. In 1999, the University help set-up and fund Clifton Heights Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (CHCURC) which is a redevelopment corporation that will promote and oversee redevelopment in the District.



East end of commercial spine - Jefferson/Vine & Calhoun Street

Not only do we need to look at what contributed toward the deterioration in the past, but what are the expected needs of the community and University in the future. The University is transforming itself from a commuter oriented local college to an urbane, international university serving a wider range of student population and programs. The resultant effect has been the reduction in the need for commuter related services, such as fast food restaurants -- to a demand for on-campus and adjacent housing with related services.

The area has seen a dramatic change in the make up of the transient student population. The diversity of the students has created new challenges for the local community to serve the various needs. International students require a wider range of food establishments such as Asian, east European, Latin American, etc. The influx of students with families requires enhanced services such as family type housing, day care, health facilities, and baby shops. Aging of the permanent population has necessitated the need for elderly housing and related services. The shortage of high end office space and entertainment uses has limited potential development in the area.

Lack of adequate parking spaces has become a major issue for both the local residents and the students. Although a majority of students are living on or near campus, they still require parking spaces. In many of the adjacent housing units, there are 5 to 6 students per house, each one requiring a parking space. There is not enough space on the property or on the street to meet the demand. In addition, students and/or daytime workers from outside the District coming into the area, use street parking which aggravates the situation. The need to develop new parking solutions is a necessity.

A number of social issues can be mollified by the type and how future development will occur. The intent is to promote the area through its diversity and character into a pleasant and safe environment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Create physical and visual connections between the residential neighborhoods and the University;
2. Improve the retail quality and density within the spine, and throughout the District, to better serve the long-term residents, students, office workers, and to attract shoppers and visitors in off-peak hours;
3. Emphasize pedestrian circulation along storefronts and intersecting blocks. Cleaner, well paved sidewalks, improved lighting, denser planting and street amenities -- maintained through a maintenance program;
4. Promote open space and enrich amenities for those who live, work or study, with more places to eat, browse, enjoy the outdoors, plus cultural activities, and after hours attractions;
5. Conduct a traffic analysis to determine the feasibility/advisability of converting Calhoun and McMillan to a two-way system with the intent of slowing down traffic and encouraging retail development;
6. Strengthen the identity of the area surrounding the District by stronger physical and visual associations with its primary landmarks;
7. Use the major tools of city design -- spatial corridors, vistas, hierarchies of space, level, and scale -- to build a memorable image of an important District within the city;
8. Highlight and feature the distinguished and architecturally significant buildings within the area, raising public perception of a place of architectural quality -- Corryville Catholic Elementary School, Hughes High School, Old St. George, and the YMCA;
9. Give the District a sense of place that is welcoming and pleasurable by day and night, creating nighttime vistas alive with people, movement, and a safe warm magical glow of light;
10. Enhance the east and west end of the commercial spine as a gateway to the District;
11. Integrate both Corryville Catholic Elementary School, Hughes High School, Old St. George, and the YMCA as an important anchors to the central spine.



Architectural significant (English Gothic) structure - YMCA